



FAQs for Baiting Regulations

The Nebraska Game and Parks Commission amended wildlife regulations regarding baiting and hunting for big game and turkey in baited areas at their meeting July 16 in Sidney. The changes are meant to make the big game and turkey baiting prohibition more understandable for hunters and more enforceable for law enforcement officers. The following are frequently asked questions about the regulations:

Q. Why is baiting big game and turkey illegal?

A. The consensus among wildlife disease experts is that baiting concentrates animal activity in a very small area, thereby increasing the risk of disease transmission. Baiting and feeding of big game have hampered wildlife and livestock disease control efforts in several other states. Baiting can also adversely impact other people's wildlife management and hunting opportunities.

Q. What is considered to be bait?

A. Things that may be ingested, such as grains, fruits, vegetables, nuts, hay, minerals, salt, any food materials, commercial products containing food materials, or by-products of such materials. The use of scents is legal. Normal environmental conditions, accepted farming and ranching practices, forest management, wildlife food plantings, orchard management, or similar land management activities do not constitute baiting.

Q. What is a baited area?

A. A baited area is an area within 200 yards of any location where bait is placed or maintained for the purpose of hunting and that may serve as an attractant to big game or turkey. An area within 200 yards of bait is considered baited for 10 days following the removal of all bait.

Q. When may and may not a baited area be established for the purposes of hunting big game or turkey?

A. A baited area may not be established from 10 days before the opening of any big game or turkey season and throughout those entire seasons for the purposes of taking big game or turkey. Currently, the earliest big game season is the archery elk season on private land, which opens in mid-August. The antlerless pronghorn season runs through the end of January. Therefore, these season dates would be used to define the start and end of the fall/winter baiting prohibition period throughout the state. Baiting would also be prohibited statewide from 10 days prior to the opening of the spring turkey hunting season until it closes.

Q. May I hunt a baited area?

A. It is unlawful for a person within a baited area to hunt big game or turkey, and it is unlawful to hunt big game or turkey that are located within a baited area. To hunt legally, both the hunter and the game pursued must be outside a baited area.

Q. May I hunt immediately following the removal of a baited area?

A. No. An area within 200 yards of bait is considered baited for 10 days following the removal of all bait.

Q. As a landowner, am I restricted if my neighbor establishes a baited area?

A. No. Any restrictions apply only to property included in the same ownership, control or lease of such location where bait is placed.

Q. What species are considered to be big game?

A. Deer, elk, pronghorn, bighorn sheep and mountain lion.

Q. May I feed big game during the middle of summer on an area I intend to hunt in the fall?

A. Yes, although from a disease risk standpoint we would discourage this practice. Material that qualifies as bait may be established, utilized, or maintained until 10 days prior to the opening of any big game or turkey season. Regardless of when the bait was established, the area within 200 yards of where such bait was placed is considered a baited area for 10 days following the removal of all bait.

Q. If baiting causes a disease risk for big game, why not prohibit feeding of those species altogether?

A. Current legal opinion suggests the Commission does not have statutory authority to prohibit feeding in general, but does have the authority to regulate hunting methods.

Q. May any game birds be hunted over bait?

A. No.